

## Anya Sarinana: ROV's Ultimate Utility Player

In baseball, a utility player is a member of the team so versatile and talented that the coach can rely on them in a pinch to fill almost any position.

As leader of his department, Registrar of Voters (ROV) **Neal Kelley** depends on the flexibility of in-house utility players like **Anya Sarinana** to help his team hit a home run when the pressure is on during election season.

“Neal often pulls us off our primary assignments to meet super strict deadlines in other units, which can mean anything from moving boxes in the warehouse to speaking at a community outreach event,” she said. “I choose to see new duties as opportunities to learn, and I believe getting out of my comfort zone is where the growth happens.”

During election season, Anya also supports elected officials and candidates for office as they complete and file required nomination documents.

“This is the busiest time, when our skeleton crew of around 50 employees swells to hundreds of extra-help positions and thousands of volunteers,” she said. “It’s really great that the County makes these extra-help jobs available, because they allow recent college graduates to gain valuable workplace experience and it gives us a pool of applicants already exists that has the skills necessary to hit the ground running when full-time openings become available. It’s a win-win!”

That’s exactly how Anya got her start with the ROV. As a high school student in East Los Angeles, she applied and interviewed for a coveted slot in the Upward Bound program that provides personalized guidance and tutoring to move participants toward their goal of attending college.

“I fell in love with program staff. They opened my eyes to the fact that there are people in our communities who are out there day in and day out improving the lives of others. I wanted to do the same thing.”

After earning her bachelor’s degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from California State University, Northridge, she explored openings with non-profit organizations and heard about the wide variety of service-based fields within the County of Orange. She joined the ROV in 2010 as an extra-help office assistant in the vote-by-mail room, was hired as permanent staff in 2011 and was promoted to her current position in 2013.

In her day-to-day role as a voter registration specialist, Anya assists community members over the phone, in person and via email with questions or concerns regarding the voter registration process, helping to ensure that everyone who votes in Orange County is legally eligible and does so from the correct location.

“I enjoy doing my part to clear up misunderstandings that members of the public have about our democratic process,” she said. “For example, because Presidential debates are being televised now, some callers ask why they haven’t received their ballot for the November election. I’m glad I can explain that the election doesn’t actually take place until next year.”

She knows that every day she comes to work, she’s doing something that matters. And that’s a good feeling.

“I’m especially proud to be a part of this organization in the moments when I see someone’s dream become reality, like when I get to help a new citizen register to vote for the very first time. It’s an honor.” ■



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